

NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY
BOARD OF VISITORS
MEETING MINUTES
March 16-18, 2000

CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:

The meeting of the National Fire Academy (NFA) Board of Visitors (BOV) was called to order by Ms. Cynthia A. Wilk, Chairperson, at 8:30 a.m. on March 16, 2000. The following NFA BOV members were present for the meeting:

Cynthia A. Wilk
Assistant Director
New Jersey Department of
Community Affairs
Division of Codes and Standards
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0802

Dr. Robert S. Fleming
Professor
Rowan University
1406 Heather Lane
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19380

Donald R. Oliver, Fire Chief
Wilson Fire Rescue Services
307 West Hines Street
Wilson, North Carolina 27893

Robert J. Sledgeski
Secretary/Treasurer
Baltimore Fire Fighters Local 734
1202 Ridgely Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Neil Svetanics
5817 Holly Hills
1421 North Jefferson Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63109

Art Cota, Division Chief
State Fire Training
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, California 94244-2460

Warren McDaniels, Fire Chief
New Orleans Fire Department
317 Decatur Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

Gary Tokle (Alternate)
National Fire Protection Association
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, Massachusetts 02269

Steve Ennis (Alternate)
National Volunteer Fire Council
71 Beagle Road
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22406

The following NFA BOV member was unable to attend the meeting:

Karl J. Berardi, Captain
Manchester Fire Department
Manchester, New Hampshire
46 Quincy Drive
Bedford, New Hampshire 03110

The following FEMA personnel presented briefings during the meeting: Ron Face, Denis Onieal, Ron Face, Hugh Wood, Gerry Bassett, Charles Burkell, Carol Bouma, Trina Clever, John Kimball, Doug Williams, Jeff Dyar

Agenda:

A member suggested that each time the Board meets, it identify one or two issues and deliverables for that specific meeting. Members would keep these issues in mind during the meeting and NFA staff presentations. Specific suggestions for this meeting included

- the EFOP--possible changes in delivery and selection criteria;
- more local delivery of courses, specifically code prevention courses;
- course outcomes, assessments, and priorities; and
- systematic way to prioritize course development.

Update on Fiscal Year 2000 and Fiscal Year 2001 Budgets:

In a closed meeting session, Ron Face updated the BOV on U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) Fiscal Year 2000 and Fiscal Year 2001 Budgets.

Administrative Issues:

Mr. Face reported on different approaches to funding the BOV travel.

Dr. Onieal and Mr. Face provided clarification that under the new NFA BOV Charter, Kenneth Burris, Chief Operating Officer, is the Federal representative to the Board.

Discussion turned to the BOV membership and terms since there are a large number of Board members whose terms expire this federal fiscal year. Dr. Onieal reported that recommendations have been submitted to Director Witt. The group discussed an expected timeline for a decision from Director Witt. Ms. Wilk met with the Director last week and reported that she feels a decision will be made soon.

The BOV members toured the Learning Resource Center.

Staffing:

Mr. Face updated members on staffing changes since October 1999, including recent hires, vacancies and intermittent personnel appointments.

The appointment of Hugh Wood as the Acting Deputy Superintendent, has expired. Dr. Onieal announced that interviews for the Deputy Superintendent's position will begin next week.

Status of Work on USFA Action Plan:

Mr. Face distributed the most recent version of the USFA Action Plan and reported on several Action Plan items. USFA has established teams who are working on accomplishing these Action Plan items. An Action Plan "war room" is located in E Building. Recommendations, tasks, and accomplishments of the teams are posted in that room and are open to view by members of Congress and their staffs and USFA staff members. Team meetings are open, and every employee has the opportunity to participate. Discussion centered on the teambuilding process and employee participation.

Mr. Face briefed the BOV on the USFA's Senior Management's efforts to identify functions as part of the Action Plan goals.

When the Board conducted a meeting with the NFA staff, part of the discussion centered on the Action Plan and team approach. Staff members noted the positive aspects about this approach. While they haven't seen a noticeable difference yet, they anticipate positive outcomes. The Board asked whether the team approach is working, how it is working, how it is supposed to work, and what needs to be done. Staff feels the teams are producing results and show promise.

Enfranchisement and Endorsement

Dr. Onieal and two State Training Directors, Tim Dunkle (Pennsylvania) and Adam Piskura (Connecticut) outlined the concept of enfranchisement and endorsement for the Board. As part of the background for the development of the concept, Dr. Onieal listed some of the recurring issues the States have brought up regarding NFA courses: 1) NFA needs to get more courses off campus; 2) not all NFA courses are relevant to the students (i.e., don't address local needs); 3) it takes too long to develop courses and get them off campus; and 4) the States need more money for training.

Enfranchisement is a partnership between State training and NFA. The State training system could deliver NFA courses using NFA curriculum and NFA instructors. NFA would issue certificates. The State would follow NFA criteria and would bear the training cost.

Endorsement would involve NFA working with States to establish course criteria. States could submit a course into the system. That course is then peer-reviewed in a geographically distant area. If it passes this peer review, NFA would endorse the course and issue NFA certificates to students. The students would be entered into the NFA database. States use their instructors and bear the training cost. The NFA would not become involved in any negotiations between States regarding the course review.

NFA will also develop a third program (currently known as Direct Delivery and Handoff). States would receive grants for training to deliver NFA courses

Discussion of this proposal followed and included questions of how these programs would work and how this will affect States and metros

Mr. Dunkle briefed the group on TRADE's Crosswalk Project. This project was prompted by the States' need to readily identify which NFPA standards are addressed in NFA courses. The TRADE group has begun work on this effort, and they hope to have a reference document completed by January 2001. Also, part of NFA's endorsement criteria for State courses would be identification of how the proposed course crosswalks to a national standard.

A member moved to endorse the proposal; it was seconded. Mr. Cota moved to amend this to add that the BOV **directs** NFA to move in this direction. The discussion on the motion included a concern about approving the plan without viewing the details versus endorsing the concept. It was also pointed out that this proposal meets two of the concerns addressed voiced by the Board - more local delivery of courses, specifically fire prevention courses; and a systematic way to prioritize course development.

Dr. Fleming amended the motion to "strongly" endorse the enfranchisement/endorsement concept. Mr. Cota accepted the amendment. The members unanimously approved the motion.

Meeting with NFA Staff:

Several NFA staff members met with the BOV. The basic reorganization plans were discussed.

Several BOV members expressed how pleased they are at the changes happening at USFA/NFA. The BOV congratulated Mr. Kaplan and Ms. Heilig on receiving the Director's Award. Mr. Tokle also shared the positive feedback they received at their lunch meeting today with some NFA students. Over the past several years, there have been significant changes in student attitudes and feedback toward NFA. He commended NFA staff for the efforts they are making. Discussion centered on the nature of change.

The BOV and the staff discussed conducting a type of Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) (or some other counseling) to bring closure to the many issues that had been raised over the last 2 years.

Course Development Update:

NFA staff members (Hugh Wood, Gerry Bassett, and Carol Bouma) briefed the group on NFA course development.

List of Courses and Priorities:

NFA has developed a course menu for States to choose from. By offering a wide option of menus, the States will have a good selection. The three resident courses made available were selected based on customer request and student demand. Approximately half of the courses are new offerings to the States.

To help offset the costs to the States, \$25,000 in grants are proposed for distribution to each State (\$20,000 for training costs and \$5,000 for administration costs) for delivery of courses via the enfranchisement, endorsement, or revised handoff initiatives. The key will be data collection to verify number of students trained. The State is responsible for all administrative responsibility. The grant money is for training and cannot be used for stipends.

The BOV discussed the concept of endorsement and enfranchisement with the staff.

Dr. Onieal clarified that the grant money can be used for student manuals. The new plan is that when students attend a Train-the-Trainer, they will receive a CD-ROM of the course. They can then return home and reproduce the course materials. Last year, NFA distributed 140,000 student manuals; however, the States only reported 60,000 students trained.

Partnerships:

Mr. Wood reported on several partnerships that USFA has formed. USFA has developed a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) as a result of USFA's ICS and simulation programs. A resulting product is the tutorial CD-ROM that will soon be available. Another benefit of this partnership is that, for the first time, USFS is capable of delivering a wildfire training simulation model to their folks.

Also as a result of the simulation activities, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), with Yale University, wants to study how the fire service makes decisions and generate some best-practice safety results.

NFA has also identified the need for a course to identify high-risk groups. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is providing its research and assistance to development of this course. In addition, a lot of USFA publications and programs are focused on high-risk groups and will be included in the course.

The partnership with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) resulted in faster notification to the fire service of the Federal court's *Dauber* decision, which directly affects fire arson investigators. In addition, ATF requested assistance in development of an interactive, virtual reality CD-ROM. That has been developed and should be available soon.

NFA will offer 10 one-day workshops this summer, one in each FEMA Region. The 8-hour workshop will cover performance-based codes. Locations and exact dates are unknown at this time. NFA hopes to reach 1,000 people in these workshops. As a result of the information gleaned from this effort, NFA hopes to begin development on a performance-based codes course sometime in 2001.

The Action Plan Partnership team has developed a list of all the current partnerships that USFA has. Ms. Bouma added that the Action Plan makes several provisions for partnership opportunities, including partnering with the States and forming partnerships with allied agencies. Members requested a list of the partnerships, as well as an NFA catalog.

Status of Course Development:

Ms. Bouma distributed NFA curriculum development projects for Fiscal Years 1998, 1999, and 2000. She provided an overview of how the worksheets are laid out. Each handout lists the courses completed in that Fiscal Year, as well as courses under development. She further discussed the development process.

Discussion followed on getting NFA staff out to the field so they can see how the "real" world operates and does things (i.e., to have experiences and training). Mr. Cota recommended that the BOV address this as a formal recommendation. The Board agreed.

Ms. Bouma went on to say that 1999 was an outstanding year in terms of work produced. The Year 2000 is also going to be a productive year. She provided an overview of the priorities review process and funding. Program Chairs submit proposals for new and revised courses. Senior Management reviews these proposals and then votes on priorities. Once this process is complete, they look at funds and establish a development list. Assignments are made within the curriculum branch. A new element is that half a position has been allocated to collect needs assessment information. The Board discussed the use of reading materials and assignments prior to the course. Suggestions included pre-course testing over the Internet.

There was also discussion on fire prevention. For instance, part of the internal criteria for the 2000 priorities review was that Program Chairs provide supporting data that show life safety would be improved. There was a suggestion to make fire prevention courses a prerequisite for upper level courses. A BOV member suggested an 8-hour self-study CD-ROM that could be used as part of other training programs (i.e., in a fire department Firefighter 1 recruit class).

Courses Requested by the States for Development:

Ms. Bouma announced that no courses were requested by the States for development. TRADE usually identifies course requests as part of its report. They were waiting to see what happened at NFA. They didn't want to add to the issues being addressed by the Action Plan. Also, TRADE is currently working on self-identity issues. The group discussed the shift in the timeline for priorities review and whether it affected TRADE's opportunity to submit ideas. Ms. Bouma responded that this doesn't seem to have been the issue.

Further Discussion:

Ms. Wilk distributed the USFA Partnership Team's working information. Discussion followed. The Board would like to see a list of the teams that have been formed, what they are working on, projected outcomes, and target dates, etc. The BOV requested a summary document to track the progress of the teams in relation to the Action Plan. Mr. Face clarified that teams do not have any established timelines. In fact, this is a task for the teams.

Long-Term Evaluation Results:

Trina Clever and Dr. Mary Paula Walsh briefed the members on long-term evaluation results. They also provided an overview on how these results affect course development.

Dr. Walsh explained how the long-term evaluations are gathered, analyzed, and evaluated. Once the data are collected, reports are generated for the Program Chairs. Evaluations usually are requested at 4 months after course completion. The return rate for evaluations is around 78 percent. They now have 3 years of data which provide an interesting picture of the resident course curriculum.

Plans call for this to expand to include the EFO Program (stratified by year of certification and by gender). The evaluations will look at how EFO graduates are effecting change in their organization and other key areas.

They distributed examples of how the data are used as a tool. Dr. Walsh emphasized that this is a data-driven process for identifying areas of improvement and revision in a course. Future plans call for the long-term evaluations of off-campus courses.

Members questioned if the EFO aspect would be able to determine the incremental value of going through the program versus just taking the individual course. Dr. Walsh replied that this data collection would be possible, if identified as a need by NFA. They also can gather curriculum-wide data. Based on the last three years of data, she can identify what the resident population and their supervisors see as curriculum needs.

Ms. Wilk asked for a status on publishing articles and data on the Web. Dr. Onieal said that Polly Birdsall has written articles which are being forwarded to FEMA's Media Affairs.

Dr. Onieal distributed the Admissions system data notebook.

Terrorism Money/Courses:

Doug Williams briefed the group on the counter-terrorism funding used for delivery of NFA courses. He also talked about the Emergency Response to Terrorism (ERT) job aid. He described how the funding has been funneled to the States in the past, citing several problems with money not reaching State fire training through emergency management agencies. As a result, the process was changed so that NFA could grant monies to State fire training directly. The current grants have a period of performance that ends September 30, 2000. NFA is now preparing for the next year. He outlined funding uses that are allowed under the grants.

There is a mechanism for reporting back on the grants. They also provide student data. Discussion centered on sample uses for the funding, including capital expenses (i.e., camera projection system, computers, and vehicles) as long as it ties directly to a project work plan. States can request no-cost extensions to the work plans. The group requested further clarification on how the funding is used. They also discussed how ICS fits into the courses and possible redundancy.

John Kimball, the Haz Mat/Terrorism Program Chair, distributed a course list and description. He also discussed the ERT job aid. This document will be laminated and color coded, and will be distributed as part of courses and as a standalone. The BOV requested copies be sent to them when it is completed. Dr. Onieal credited D. Williams, J. Kimball, and G. Bassett with a lot of hard work and effort. A Board member asked what plans they have to keep this updated. This issue is being addressed and they hope to update the job aid annually.

Mr. Kimball provided an overview of the content and target audience for the 2-day course, *Emergency Response to Terrorism: Strategic Considerations for Company Officers* (ERT: SCCO). NFA also plans to develop a course for the advanced tactical manager on weapons of mass destruction. Discussion centered on involvement and participation by the health field. NFA is trying to apply weapons of mass destruction-based scenarios into traditional delivery courses. Within the traditional haz mat field, the *Chemistry of Hazardous Materials* (CHM) course is being revised.

Update on Arson Curriculum:

Mr. Williams reviewed the current arson curriculum, and briefed the group on planned revisions to courses in the arson curriculum. NFA is planning to upgrade the visuals in many of the courses. (Mr. Cota offered to send their slide visuals.) They have developed a proposed draft of new instructor selection criteria. These criteria are currently under review by USFA's arson team.

He reported that NFA will be developing an interview interrogation course, in partnership with ATF and the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI). A spin-off 2-day course will be developed that will relate to interview interrogation for the volunteer fire department. Discussion centered on differences between the career and volunteer needs in this area.

He also addressed the Federal court's *Dauber* decision and its impact on arson investigators, as well as the other examples of ATF's partnering with USFA.

He referenced the double CD-ROM "Inter Fire VR" (an interactive virtual reality fire training program), created in partnership with other agencies, that will be distributed to students. Board members requested copies of the CD-ROM.

Future projects include developing an arson prosecutor's program, and delivering the *Fire Arson Investigation* (FAI) course in off-campus settings. They are also exploring advanced issues in arson investigation. Also, NFA has the capability of creating virtual reality scenarios.

A member asked if there were any plans for an arson self-study course. Mr. Williams responded that NFA is not planning such a course; however, related courses are available through the Degrees at a Distance program. Mr. Cota encouraged NFA to look into this as a real need.

Status of EMS Courses:

Jeff Dyar briefed the group on USFA's EMS Team, including members and team goals. The team is an effort to coordinate EMS goals across organizational lines. He provided an overview of the EMS courses, including a 9-week Internet-based course for volunteers. Discussion followed.

Mr. Dyar provided an update on several research initiatives. They are working with a University of Maryland graduate student who did a paper on violence in the EMS workplace. NFA wants to work with NIOSH and see if they will help develop a way to track EMS workplace violence.

NFA is going to update *Advanced Life Support for Hazardous Materials* to include terrorism issues. The Salt Lake City Olympic Planning Committee offered NFA courses to first responders, and they are interested in more courses.

Mr. Dyar also stated that the health and safety curriculum has been attached to EMS program activities since 1993. The EMS team is trying to broaden the horizon and make health and safety a program in itself, especially in light of the reorganization. The team has several ideas for new courses (2-in, 2-out issues, rapid intervention, etc.).

Technology at NFA:

Discussions included funding – both for staff and for classrooms as well as what staff support exists.

Report on Revision of *Executive Leadership* Course:

Mr. Burkell reported on revisions to the *Executive Leadership* (EL) course. The history of the EL revisions is about 3 years old. They held a pilot in February that was very successful. They still have some work to do and hope to have all revisions completed by May. Most revisions at this point are basically restructuring of existing units. The overall intent is to focus on the leadership skills needed for individual effectiveness.

BOV members asked if EL lends itself to enfranchisement. This is possible; however, there are some issues that would need to be resolved including costs of instrumentation materials. There would also be logistical challenges and other costs (videos, etc.), as well as concern about lack of NFA faculty presence. Discussion centered on the NFA instructor list and selection process. Mr. Burkell stated that there are currently about 15 individuals who are qualified to teach EL. Discussion focused on establishing provisions to allow new qualified instructors.

Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP):

Mr. Burkell stated that the issue raised in the Florida Executive Fire Officers' Association's letter is not a new issue; it has been around for many years. While it is a valid issue, if NFA altered its target audience, there would be advantages and disadvantages. An Action Plan item addressed the issue of the EFOP target audience and selection criteria. The team working on this has recommended not to do anything with this until later this summer. NFA will host a review of the EFOP July 27-30, 2000. Recommendations would be made to management on how to move forward on all aspects of EFOP. Based on these recommendations, the Action Plan team hopes to make a more enlightened setup of recommendations by October 1.

Chief Oliver is pleased to hear that EFO will be reviewed. He suggested that the BOV respond to the Florida Executive Fire Officers' Association's letter, letting them know that something is happening.

Discussion followed on specific EFOP issues. Mr. Fleming sees the EFO program as the flagship of the NFA. He recommended that NFA explore the concept of offering the first two years as a Regional Delivery, allowing company officers to attend, then offer the last two years on campus. He's not sure that NFA applies the concepts in SMOC to its own programs.

Chief Svetanics is concerned that any changes be properly funded--don't want to downgrade the course requirements. Discussion centered on diversity issues. Some diversity statistics are in the applications data notebook that Dr. Onieal distributed earlier.

Recommendations to Director Witt:

The BOV met on Saturday morning, March 18, to finish their letter of recommendations to FEMA Director James L. Witt.

The NFA BOV Meeting adjourned at 10 a.m. on March 18, 2000.